

**Question for written answer E-009853/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Submersion of concrete blocks in the Bay of Algeciras

As a result of problems encountered in the waters off Gibraltar, fishing fleets from the Campo de Gibraltar (Cádiz) have incurred total losses exceeding EUR 1.5 million, affecting 70 vessels and 300 local families.

On 24 July, matters came to a head following a unilateral decision by the Gibraltar authorities to drop 70 two-tonne C40 cement blocks into the Bay of Algeciras. Quite apart from the question of sovereignty regarding these Spanish waters, this action is causing the destruction of traditional fishing grounds and the livelihood of fishing fleets, as well as having a major impact on what is an environmental conservation area.

Notwithstanding the flood of protests and complaints and the forthcoming hearing of EU experts, the Gibraltar authorities are clearly determined to proceed regardless with their chosen course of action, the next step being the planned submersion of at least two 12-tonne blocks in the disputed zone, effectively barring local fleets from access to these fishing grounds and seriously impacting on the economic situation and employment in the area.

Can the Commission say whether the actions of the Gibraltar authorities are in compliance with EU law? Will it take urgent measures to prevent any further unilateral initiatives such as the submersion of additional cement blocks? Is it envisaging any measures to remedy the situation and compensate local fishermen and their families for the social and economic hardships suffered by them as a consequence of the above actions?